

"Winged Warriors: The Cold War from the Cockpit" - by Paul McDonald

Paul McDonald - Biography

Paul McDonald is a true Cold War Warrior. A former RAF group captain and fast-jet pilot, he tells an airman's story of life on NATO's front line opposite the might of the USSR during the tense decades prior to the collapse of the Soviet Empire. His is an unusual perspective: he was a working class 'Geordie', born in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, and brought up on a council estate in the shadow of Consett's iron and steel works.

Educated in and around Consett and at Hebburn-on-Tyne, Paul was neither an academic nor a sportsman. He did not go to university and instead worked for four years as a trainee surveyor for an estate agent.

The working class lad from the North East found himself as a squadron leader, sitting in a nuclear-armed Tornado ready to respond in full measure to an anticipated Soviet attack across the Inner German Border. But how?

It was the Air Cadets that 'lit the fire' in Paul. He revelled in the adventure and camaraderie on offer. He became a glider pilot at 16 and gained a Private Pilot's Licence at 18 - before he could drive a car. But he also tasted failure when his first application to join the RAF was rejected.

In *Winged Warriors - The Cold War from the Cockpit*, Paul charts a path through many obstacles until he was awarded the coveted RAF pilot's brevet. He went on to serve on low level photo-reconnaissance aircraft on NATO's vulnerable southern flank, became a flying instructor and an air display pilot, was decorated for gallantry, and served on two separate Tornado strike/attack squadrons at the height of the Cold War.

The 'non-academic' from Consett then became a lecturer in the UK's air warfare college, a prize-winning RAF essay writer and a member of staff of the Royal College of Defence Studies, the UK's most prestigious defence college. In the interim, he commanded the flying wing of the RAF's oldest flight training school, teaching and examining on four types of aircraft, for which he was appointed OBE. He subsequently spent four years as an adviser in Kuwait giving him fascinating insight into life across the border from a belligerent Iraq and its tyrannical leader, Saddam Hussein. Paul's final appointment was at the heart of NATO's air HQ at Ramstein where he was a senior planner and the UK Senior National Representative.

Now in North Yorkshire, and a Tucano flight simulator instructor at RAF Linton on Ouse, Paul teaches the next generation of young men and women destined to become RAF fast-jet pilots. He also continues to support the Air Cadets as a volunteer gliding instructor, inspiring young people to follow in his footsteps.

Paul's depth of knowledge about the RAF, which spans five decades, his humour and his compassion, make this a unique tale of the ordinary people who found themselves in extraordinary circumstances - the people who became the UK's *Winged Warriors*.

'*Winged Warriors - The Cold War from the Cockpit*' is Paul McDonald's first book. It is published by Pen & Sword, and scheduled for release in September 2012. For more information on the author and the book, including extracts and a photo gallery, please visit www.wingedwarriors.co.uk

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